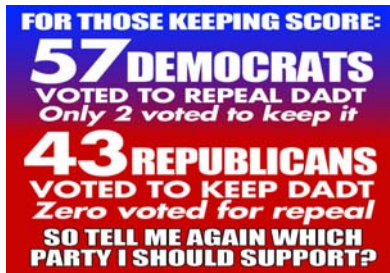
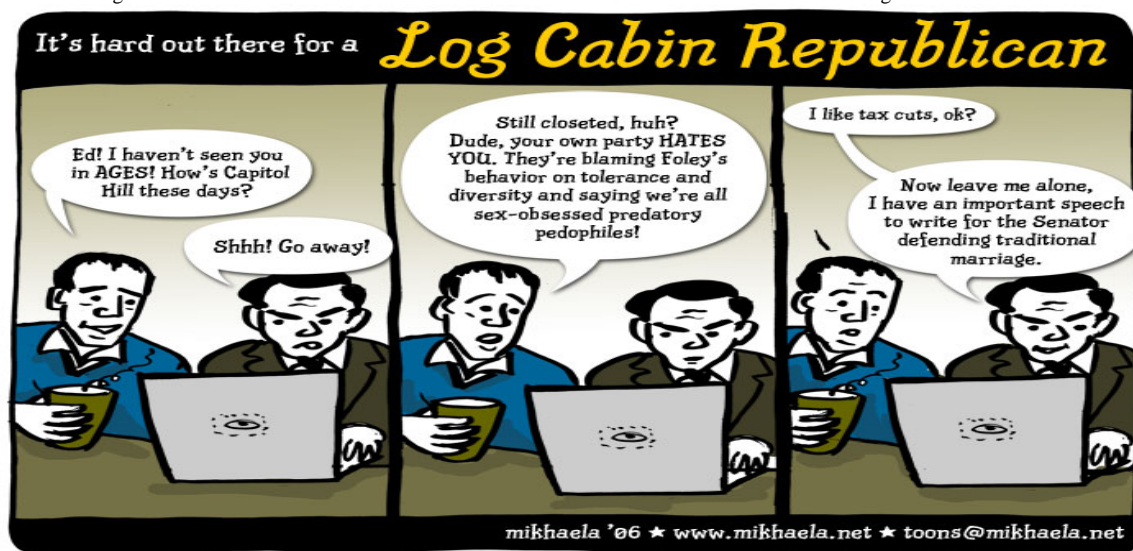


# Majority Rule and Minority Rights

## Issue Brief

### LGBT and Party Affiliation

Figure 1.<sup>i</sup>Figure 2.<sup>ii</sup>Figure 3.<sup>iii</sup>

- Log Cabin Republicans: National LGBT organization affiliated with the Republican Party.
- The National Stonewall Democrats: National LGBT rights group affiliated with the Democratic Party.
- Party: An organization that runs candidates for elected office under a single label.
- Catch-All Parties, Big Tent Parties: a political party that attempt to attract as many voters as possible. Tend to have vague and overarching ideologies.

The most prominent LGBT advocacy group in the Republican Party calls itself

the Log Cabin Republicans. The main LBGT advocacy group within the Democratic Party is called the National Stonewall Democrats. Both mainly advocate for the rights and equal treatment of those in the LGBT community; however, by analyzing the mission statement of each advocacy group, we can see the different relationships the Log Cabin Republicans and the National Stonewall Democrats have with their respective party.

On their website, the Log Cabin Republicans claim they are “the nation’s only organization of Republicans who support fairness, freedom, and equality for gay and lesbian Americans.”<sup>iv</sup> Their mission statement notes they are “loyal Republicans that believe in limited government, strong national defense, free markets, low taxes, personal responsibility, and individual liberty.”<sup>v</sup> There are two striking aspects within the Log Cabin Republican’s mission statement. Firstly, they describe themselves as the only organization in the Republican Party that supports LGBT rights, indirectly, declaring the lack of LGBT advocacy groups within the Republican Party. The second interesting component is the Log Cabins repetitive statements of loyalty to the Republican Party. On one side, the Log Cabin Republicans truly believe in most of the core values of the Republican Party but they hope that Republican platform can expand to include pro-LGBT policies.

Conversely, the National Stonewall Democrats categorize themselves as “a grassroots network connecting LGBT Democratic activist from Seattle, Washington, to Austin, Texas to Little Rock, Arkansas to Atlanta, Georgia. With more than 90 chapters across the country, Stonewall is a grassroots force for social change within our movement and within our party”<sup>vi</sup>. The National Stonewall Democrats is an expansive national organization. They believe they are more than just a voice within the Democratic Party

but a movement. The mission statement continues to note that the Stonewall organization mobilizes to get out the vote of “fair-minded Democrats; and standing up when Republicans attack our families and our civil rights<sup>vii</sup>” The Stonewall organization seems to recognize that not all Democrats are in favor of LGBT rights; nonetheless, there are “fair-minded” democrats who help the LGBT community achieve benefits from the Democratic party. The Stonewall organization identifies the Republican party as a threatening and antagonistic to the civil rights of the LGBT community.

One of the stark differences between the Log Cabins Republicans and the National Stonewall Democrats are their reasons for being part of their respective parties. The Log Cabin Republicans demonstrate that they are Republicans because they believe in the core values of the Republican Party. It seems that the Log Cabin’s only troubling concern is the lack of inclusion of the LGBT community within the Republican Party. Nonetheless, the fact that they are an advocacy group within the Republican Party demonstrates that they believe the Republican Party can change and become more inclusive of LGBT issues.

The Stonewall Democrats, on the hand, seem to have a much different reason for their allegiance to the Democratic Party. Not once throughout the mission statement do they mention any traditional values of the Democratic Party. The organization only empathizes with the ‘fair-minded’ democrats meaning only those who are pro-LGBT. In their mission statement, the Stonewall Democrats state that “Stonewall’s work within the Democratic party has lead to tangible benefits for our families”. The Stonewall Democrat’s allegiance is based on efficacy. They feel that the Democratic Party as the only party in which they can garner real results for the LGBT community. The Log

Cabin Republicans are, ultimately, ideologically bound to the Republican Party and seeks to make the party more inclusive of the LGBT community without changing the party's traditional values. The Stonewall Democrats are not bound to the Democratic Party because of ideology but because it is the party that has given them results.

In the article "Rights or Benefits? Explaining the Sexual Identity Gap in American Political Behavior", Brian Shafnner and Nenad Senic evaluate why the LGBT community is prone to vote Democrat. Senic and Shafnner assess that "the key issue driving the party identification and vote decisions appears to be that of tangible economic benefits rather than civil rights goals"<sup>viii</sup>. Shafnner and Senic describe that neither party has taken a position in favor of the right to same-sex marriage. The Democrats have taken the position that marriage benefits should be extended to gay spouses. As stated by the Stonewall Democrats, tangible benefits are achievable through the Democratic Party; yet, civil rights is another issue. Ultimately, "there is little political reason for Democrats to take such a position since the party enjoys a large advantage among LGB voters"<sup>ix</sup>. The two party systems create catch-all parties that try their best to not have a clear ideology in fear of losing any part of their constituency. The Democrats are the only party that is giving tangible benefits to the gay and lesbian community. The party does not have to take a staunch position because Republicans are, currently, not the more viable option for LGBT voters.

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Figure 1. [http://www.sodahead.com/united-states/democrats\\_defeat\\_its\\_a\\_gay\\_marriage\\_poster-p228379404694869922td2h\\_210.jpg&q=gay%2Bdemocrats](http://www.sodahead.com/united-states/democrats_defeat_its_a_gay_marriage_poster-p228379404694869922td2h_210.jpg&q=gay%2Bdemocrats)

ii Figure 2.  
[http://1.bp.blogspot.com/\\_kC5MT2r5U8s/TJrAfuSu7bI/AAAAAAAAAQ0g/j3DXK2FNVjI/s1600/10DADT+repeal+Vote.jpg](http://1.bp.blogspot.com/_kC5MT2r5U8s/TJrAfuSu7bI/AAAAAAAAAQ0g/j3DXK2FNVjI/s1600/10DADT+repeal+Vote.jpg)

iii Figure 3. <http://www.mikhaela.net/pictures/toons/logcabin.jpg>

iv , [http://www.logcabin.org/site/c.nsKSL7PMLpF/b.5468127/k.A241/Our\\_Mission.htm](http://www.logcabin.org/site/c.nsKSL7PMLpF/b.5468127/k.A241/Our_Mission.htm)

v [http://www.logcabin.org/site/c.nsKSL7PMLpF/b.5468127/k.A241/Our\\_Mission.htm](http://www.logcabin.org/site/c.nsKSL7PMLpF/b.5468127/k.A241/Our_Mission.htm)

vi <http://www.stonewalldemocrats.org/about/who>

vii <http://www.stonewalldemocrats.org/about/who>

viii Shaffner, Brian and Nenad Senic. "Rights or Benefits? Explaining the Sexual Identity Gap in American Political behavior". Political Research Quaterly, Vol. 59: 2006. p. 129.

ix Shaffner, Brian. p.129.